

M e m o r a n d u m

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: July 13-14, 2005

Reference No.: 2.2a.(2)
Action Item

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Chief Financial Officer

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Ref: **SUMMARY – NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT,
ROUTE 99 IN MERCED COUNTY – REALIGN AND WIDEN TO SIX-LANE FREEWAY
NEAR MERCED**

ISSUE:

The California Transportation Commission is being asked to review and comment at the July 2005 Commission meeting on the following Notice of Preparation (NOP):

- 10-Mer-99, KP 0.0/16.8 (PM 0.0/10.5). Realign and widen to six-lane freeway near Merced in Merced County.

PROGRAMMING:

This project is not fully funded. This project is programmed in the 2004 State Transportation Improvement Program for \$34,000,000 in Interregional Improvement Program funds and \$10,000,000 in Traffic Congestion Relief Program funds for capital and support. The total estimated project cost is \$222,000,000. Construction is estimated to begin in FY 2008-09.

ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED:

This project consists of two sections: the Plainsburg section and the Arboleda section. In the Plainsburg section there are four alternatives in addition to the No Build Alternative; in the Arboleda section there are two alternatives in addition to the No-Build Alternative. One alternative from each section would be selected. The selection of an alternative from one section does not limit the selection of an alternative from the other section.

The four build alternatives currently under consideration for the Plainsburg Section (Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2, and 3) would provide the following features using different alignments:

- Construct a six-lane freeway on an eight-lane right-of-way.
- Construct a diamond interchange at Sandy Mush/Plainsburg Avenue.
- Construct an eastern frontage road resulting in alterations to Plainsburg Avenue.
- Convert the existing southbound lanes into the proposed western frontage roads.
- Realign a section of Sandy Mush Road to tie in to the proposed interchange.
- Realign a section of Plainsburg Road to tie in to the proposed interchange.

The two build alternatives currently under consideration for the Arboleda Section (Alternatives 4 and 5) would provide the following:

- Alternative 4 – Construct an interchange at Arboleda Drive.
- Alternative 5 – Construct an interchange at Le Grande Drive.

POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

- Loss of farmland – approximately 700 to 1,000 acres.
- Noise impacts – increase of over 12 decibels for four receptors.
- Cumulative impacts to farmland and habitat for sensitive species including kit fox.
- Impacts to two archaeological sites.

Because there will be unmitigated potentially significant impacts, an Environmental Impact Report with a Statement of Overriding Considerations is being prepared.

PROPOSED MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM:

- Mitigation for impacts to habitat for sensitive species.
- Mitigation for impacts to archaeological sites.

Attachment

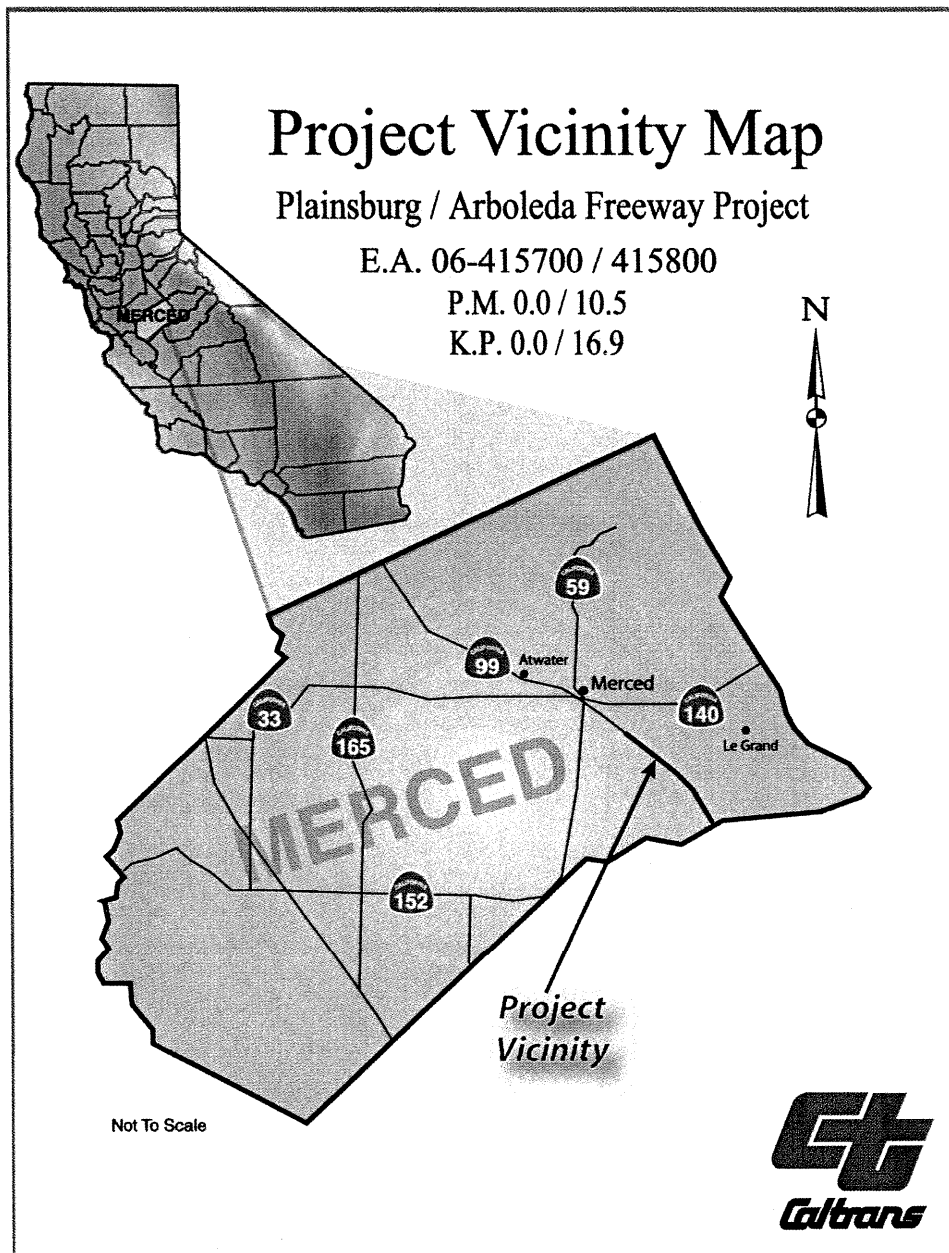


Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map